

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 25-42 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein and replaced by new claims 43-58. Claims 43-58 have been drafted to clarify features of the invention recited therein.

Claims 25-42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ando et al. (EP 1039725) in view of Maciel et al (U.S. 6,112,248). This rejection is considered moot based on the above-mentioned cancellation of claims 25-42. Further, this rejection is believed clearly inapplicable to new claims 43-58 for the following reasons.

New independent claim 43 recites a method of starting a first routing device connecting a plurality of networks to which a plurality of routing devices are connected, wherein, (1) each routing device stores master router data for each network to which the respective routing device is connected and network identification data, and (2) the master router data stored by each routing device indicates whether the respective routing device is a master router located on a path to a parent router that assigns the network identification data to identify the networks or a slave router. Claims 43 also recites (3) disabling a router function of the first routing device when a number of detected master routers connected to any of the networks to which the first routing device connects is zero or two or more, the number being based on acquired master router data received from the routers in response to requesting the master router data from each of the routing devices connected to any of the networks to which the first routing device connects. The Ando and Maciel references, or any combination thereof, fail to disclose or suggest the above-mentioned distinguishing features (1)-(3) as recited in independent claim 43.

Initially, it is noted that on pages 3 and 4 of the Office Action the Examiner acknowledges that Ando fails to disclose or suggest the above-mentioned distinguishing features (1)-(3) of claim 43. In light of the deficiencies of Ando, the rejection relies on Maciel for teaching the above-mentioned distinguishing features (1)-(3). However, Maciel fails to disclose or suggest distinguishing features (1)-(3), as recited in independent claim 43.

Rather, Maciel teaches a global routing table 73 containing information for each router, the information being a physical address, a network address, a next hop, and a priority of the router (see col. 5, line 65 – col. 6, line 5). Further, Maciel teaches reading all of the entries in the global routing table 73 to verifying the status of each router (i.e., whether the router is active or not), and removing a router entry in the global routing table 73 for the routers that are not active (see col. 6, lines 14-21). Finally, Maciel teaches that, for the remainder of the routers included in the global routing table 73, the routers having the lowest priority are selected and the remainder of the non-selected router entries are removed from the global routing table 73, wherein the routers identified by the remaining router entries are utilized by a target network 731 (see col. 6, lines 22-27).

Thus, in view of the above, it is clear that Maciel teaches that a global routing table 73 contains information for each router, but does not disclose or suggest that each routing device stores master router data for each network to which the respective routing device is connected, as required by claim 43.

In addition, it is apparent that Maciel teaches that the global routing table 73 contains information indicating whether each router is active or not and information identifying the priority of each router, but does not disclose or suggest that the master router data stored by each routing device indicates whether the respective routing device is a master router located on a path to a parent router that assigns the network identification data to identify the networks or a slave router, as recited in claim 43.

Moreover, Maciel teaches that only active routers having a low priority remain in the global routing table (the other routers that are not active or have a high priority are deleted from the table) for identifying routers to be used by the target network, but does not disclose or suggest disabling a router function of the first routing device when a number of detected master routers connected to any of the the networks to which the first routing device connects is zero or two or more (the number being based on acquired master router data received from the routers in response to requesting the master router data from each of the routing devices), as required by claim 43. Therefore, because of the above-mentioned distinctions it is believed clear that

independent claim 43 and claims 44-47 and 49-58 which depend therefrom would not have been obvious or result from any combination of Ando and Maciel.

Furthermore, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Ando or Maciel or elsewhere in the prior art of record which would have caused a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Ando and/or Maciel to obtain the invention of independent claim 43. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 43 and claims 44-47 and 49-58 which depend therefrom are clearly allowable over the prior art of record.

New independent claim 48 recites a routing device which includes limitations that correspond to the above-mentioned distinguishing features of independent claim 43 (e.g., requesting master router data and disabling the first router based on master router data). Thus, for the same reasons discussed above, it is respectfully submitted that claim 48 is allowable over Ando and Maciel.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance and an early notification thereof is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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March 10, 2008